**Beasts in the dark**

Posted originally on the Archive of Our Own at http://archiveofourown.org/works/16983252.

| | |
|---|---|
| Rating: | Explicit |
| Archive Warning: | Graphic Depictions Of Violence |
| Category: | M/M |
| Fandoms: | Hannibal (TV), Hannibal Lecter Series - All Media Types |
| Relationship: | Will Graham/Hannibal Lecter |
| Characters: | Abigail Hobbs, Jack Crawford, Garrett Jacob Hobbs, Hannibal Lecter, Beverly Katz, Will Graham, Margot Verger, Mason Verger, Freddie Lounds, Jimmy Price, Brian Zeller |
| Additional Tags: | Dark Will, The New Orleans Beast, Abigail Hobbs Lives, Will Graham is So Done, Canon-Typical Violence, Sharing a Bed, Blowjobs, Murder Husbands, Smut, Hannigram - Freeform, Young Will Graham, Manipulative Will Graham, Hannibal Lecter is the Chesapeake Ripper, Will still loves dogs, Hannibal is in awe of Will, as he should be, Not Canon Compliant, aka canon can suck it, Hannibal is a pushover, Will Graham Doesn't Need Help |
| Language: | English |
| Series: | Part 2 of Beasts |
| Stats: | Published: 2018-12-14 Updated: 2018-12-26 Words: 18,106 Chapters: 12/? |

# Beasts in the dark

by Beautiful_Failures_are_all_we_have

Summary

An au where Will accepts that he is a killer.

The New Orleans beast, a prolific serial killer who was thought to be dead, makes an appearance in Baltimore, making contact with the Chesapeake Ripper.
Will, a rude, stubborn, and abrasive FBI teacher makes an appearance of being sane, and makes contact with one Hannibal Lecter. Hannibal and Will find one another, like they always do. Will is not a stray this time, and Hannibal never needs to break him. A Beast and the Ripper, family, loyalty, love, betrayal, and what it means to be inhuman.

# A Beast is Born

Clarity was not supposed to be permanent. She was not someone Will ever imagined would be a fixture in his life. A girl this defensive was not supposed to be liked by others, but rather than being driven away, Will merely found himself relating to her. So many people had tried to get close to him, wanting to study him or use him, make fun of him the way he knew only teenagers could. It was refreshing to know someone who just wanted to meet him. Clarity was stuck between predator and prey in her own life, a combination that Will found soothing in it's own way, a balm to a life where peace and order were so highly prized. Clarity saw the world at its ugliest and refused to pretend it was anything more than that. Like her name, she was the only one who saw through the carefully constructed maze surrounding Will Graham, looking in past the twitching, silent boy and seeing the intelligence hidden in his blue eyes. She was the only one who didn't avoid him in the hallways of his school. She was the one who patched up his bloodied hand when it had tried to take on the sanding belt in shop class and he was the one who she came to when the bruises on her arms hurt. When she got a black eye and needed someone to check if the cover up was good enough, Will was her mirror. They'd become friends in little more than a week, and five months later they were as close as Will would let them get. That was two years ago.

They were sitting on the bridge, their bridge, as Clarity called it. The old wooden structure would jab you with rusty nails if you didn't know where they were. The small arch was tucked so far in the bayou that trees had started to reclaim it, turning it into more of a living thing than a skeleton. A soft buzzing song of bugs filled the air. The sunset glowed like the dying embers of a bonfire, still holding stories and one last roasted marshmallow. They were speaking no louder than usual. They were never loud. Almost never loud.
"He wants me dead," she stated, voice toneless and calm. Her face told the same story and Will was at a loss. He was terrible at working out what others thought, partly because there was no one who wanted to be around long enough for him to read them. Mainly because he didn't let people get into his mind. He was very careful about who he let up there. Cautiously, he reached his hand out, onto her shoulder. She flinched.

"S-sorry."

The word tumbled from his lips like a rock into still water. His voice was soft, it cracked slightly from disuse. He started to pull his hand away, before she stopped him. Putting his hand back on Clarity's shoulder slowly, Will saw that even when she winced again, Clarity continued to guide his hand towards her. Will gave a puzzled look.

"It's just a bit tender there. Just… be gentle about it."

He nodded, leaning back onto the rail of their tiny safe haven. Clarity looked down towards the water, her copper hair seeming to blend into the sunset in the reflection.

"He hates me."

The words clawed their way past her lips, charged with the same emotion as every other word she said about the vile man that was her brother. Words that sounded like they were going to burst out and tear away what was causing their speaker pain.

“He hates me! The only reason he keeps me around is because he know if he lets me go I’ll be free,”

her voice grew louder until she was shaking with all the anger she had so carefully packaged away. The shaking caused Will’s hand to brush closer to her neck and his fingers wiped away some of the generously applied makeup. The powder stained his fingertips like ink stained Clarity’s hands. Will took his palm off of her shoulder and she winced.

“You don’t have to treat me like glass just because he tries to make me into it. He left me as broken as he could make me, you don’t need to prove it.”

Will felt his stomach plummet as he saw ripples in the water. Clarity closed her eyes, blinking away the tears. The water had gone into her and now it was leaving, joining the rest of the world, bearing more salt and pain than it once had. Will had cried tears like these, tears that could flood a lake or drown a god. He had felt so much loss. When he cried late at night, when he felt the blood of a cleaned fish on his hands, when he imagined what he would do to that drunk driver if he ever got his hands on him.
That was when Will cried those tears.

He felt his mind reach out, despite all the attempts he had made at keeping his empathy from latching onto her, Will felt the trap of it close, Clarity inside. He saw her, scared, alone. He saw her looking at her parents faces in photos on the mantle with accusation that they had left her to this life. He saw the face of her brother, snarling like a sick animal. He saw her reaching for Will himself and finding something unexpectedly safe about how unlike the beast that chased her he was. He saw someone who needed him. He saw a sick animal. He saw pain and he saw the only way to end it. Will put his hand back on her bruised shoulder. Clarity would be safe soon. He had an animal to put down.

# A Devil in a Human Mask

Jack's office was like a cage for dark minds. Permeated by brightness and the feeling of judging eyes, it was a place Will avoided at all costs. Not only did he hate the atmosphere of the room, he hated the thought of Jack profiling him. He already found the man's abrasive nature bothersome and it would just be insulting to be caught by someone who hadn't been able to tell what he was within the first month of knowing him. Unfortunately, on paper, Will followed the general rules of society, and Jack, at least on paper, was his boss

Will entered the room with the same wariness he always projected around the FBI personnel that had woven themselves into his life. Shake a little, look a tad too harshly into their eyes, and watch them flinch first. It was a game to him. The only two people who didn't flinch were Bev and Agent Laurent. Bev, because she knew him, and Laurent because Agent Laurent gave everyone, even Will, a major case of the creeps. Price said he walked like his legs were bags of ham piloted by some confused ants, while Zeller claimed it was more like a dog walking on it's back paws while rabid. Will personally thought Scott Laurent looked like a large bird, but he didn't voice that opinion.

He was shaken from his thoughts by the ever performative voice of the Guru.

"Will! There you are! I'd like you to meet Doctor Lecter," Jack boomed out, motioning to the man already seated in front of his desk.

Will narrowed his eyes, scrutinizing his potential adversary. If Jack wanted Will reviewed by a doctor he had another thing coming. There was not a chance that Will would let Jack use another of his connections as a tool to really get a look at Will. He stayed standing, ready to leave the office the moment things went south.
Doctor Lecter seemed to be scanning Will back with the eyes of a hunter, though his smile was the very picture of non-threatening. Will could see that there was more to this falsely jovial man than one would expect. With little thought, Will made eye contact, diving into this man's mind, though not deeply. If Will hadn't been interested in a different monster already he was sure Doctor Lecter would have piqued his interest. The man was interested in murder as more than an academic pursuit, at least.

"You seem not to be afraid of eye contact," the man puzzled, brow quirked, and Will held back a laugh at this doctor who so thoroughly resembled his middle school principal with that expression.

"You have an empathy disorder?" the doctor asked, trying to seem passive to the answer, as though his whole business wasn't more or less copping a feel at Will's brain. Will felt himself boil within as the man asked for confirmation of what Jack shouldn't have told him in the first place. He gave a pointed look to Jack, who immediately defended himself, saying:

"Will, come on… work with me? Plus you've said you prefer the direct approach."

"You do speak don't you?" asked the doctor, taking a sip from an expensive looking travel mug.

Will shivered. That accent was deadly. With a sigh, he decided to play along.

"Luckily for you, yes. If Jack was so keen on giving you my information, I'm sure he mentioned that it's less to do with empathy and more to do with a very... active imagination?" the words rang true to his own ears. He very rarely actually used his gift, preferring to pretend rather than empathize. He was a good detective without empathy , and he was still sane because he didn't use it all the time.

"Either way I wouldn't have known. You seem to be the most sane empath in investigation." The man was goading Will, waiting for him to say something disagreeing with his own sanity. Jack Crawford was bringing in another of his colleagues to poke at Will, and his colleague was very on board it seemed.

"I'm the only empath in investigation, as I'm sure you were aware." The words were more rough than he'd anticipated. At the sound of them the doctor's face lit up.

'Great,' Will thought 'He was expecting that.'

Will was already tired of the smug look on the glowing face before him. He had an empathy disorder sure, but he was very adamant that he was his own person. He didn't need everyone looking into his mind.He certainly didn't want everyone seeing him as he was.

"Also Jack, I've asked you before not to talk about me with people. What happened to me getting my privacy if I agreed to help you?"

Jack had the decency to look ashamed. The profiler had heard the same speech since Will came in as a special agent the first time.

"Well... He is going to be your psychiatrist anyways... I didn't see the harm in telling him about you."

Will was unamused.

"Who says he's going to be my psychiatrist?"

"I do!" Jack stated, seeming defensive and tense, almost as if he were trying to hype himself up.

"I'm in charge, even if you're a special agent, I'm still in charge here!"

Will had had about enough of this temper tantrum. Jack needed him, not the other way around. He had needed him for the last case and he needed Will for whatever was happening now.

"I'm a teacher here, Jack. If I want to go back to my class-work-only schedule you know you can't make me stay. You dragged me out of my classroom and never even thought to give me a psychological exam before now."

Will sighed, crossing his arms defiantly, shifting his stance . Jack needed to learn that he wouldn't be so easily defeated . He relished in his privacy, in his anonymity. Even at the

academy he was no one more than "Mr. Graham" and he wanted to keep it that way. The world was an ugly place that belonged at a distance.

"If I may interrupt this conversation, Jack, you said it would be more unofficial than me being Will's psychiatrist." The smug look was gone from the blonde man's face and in its place was a look of confused, nurturing, naive concern that made Will want to leave the room. Faces had no business looking like that, and it offended him on a personal level.

"Yes. You're there to be a support. He's a support Will," Jack amended, pleading with Will not to leave at the moment.

"I don't need a support, Jack. I didn't need a support when the Shrike was involved and I don't need one now."
The Shrike. Will nearly chuckled at the thought of the man. If only Jack had given Will a support then, he might have actually caught Garrett.

Jack began to pace. He looked like he was about to confess to something and Will had the distinct image of Jack in a confessional. Did he lie there too?

"The Shrike was easy to catch. He's in prison now and you caught him. Will... I'm hesitant to even ask you on this. I know where you're from and I know what this would do to you..." Jack seemed uneasy asking. Will was starting to get uneasy listening. Then it clicked.

"Oh god, he's here isn't he?" Will said, putting just enough of a pitiful quiver in his voice to sound shaken. He knew who Jack needed him to catch and it took everything Will had not to grin at the irony.

"It's not just the Beast this time. Will, we think he's trying to contact another killer." Jack had stopped pacing, staring Will in the eyes.

"We think he's trying to contact the Chesapeake Ripper." Jack seemed drained at this announcement. Will was fed by it.

"Trying?" Will asked, faking a confusion that was the picture of innocence not quite grasping the straws. He wanted to know exactly what they thought was going on. He wanted to hear Jack's interpretation of his works.

"They're sending... letters... of sorts..." Jack replied. Will thought that was a little obvious. He'd carved a clear hello into his last animal.

"Would it be terrible of me to ask for an explanation?" Asked doctor Lecter. He seemed to be so unaware. Will almost felt bad for the man. If Will was honest he would have if not for a glint of something indescribable in those dark eyes.

"Who do you mean by the Beast?"

Jack looked over at Will. Concerned and asking for permission to tell the story. Will loved playing this part out. It was his favourite story. He nodded and Jack began.

"You've heard of the New Orleans Beast? The killer who acted in the early two thousands and then went off the grid after a victim escaped? He killed over thirty people in a six year period, same MO every time. He turned them into confessions but not before hollowing out their chests. He was a deranged man, that's why we named him The Beast."

Careful to shudder at just the right time, Will waited for Jack to continue. He hated that everyone always paused when they got to the best part. Hated that his role in this, as far as everyone else knew, was always treated like a shock, even though it was treated as one of his defining traits as far as the academy was concerned.

"The victim that got away was left injured and with memory of his attacker's appearance. We learned that the Beast was in his late forties at least, that he was white, and that he had a tattoo of an alligator on his left bicep." Jack sucked in a breath, preparing for the next reveal. Will held his own breath, trying to read the face of the audience. The doctor was seemingly unaffected save the slight quickening of his breath.

"Will was the man he tried to kill. He had lived in New Orleans all his life, and he was only 20 at the time of the first killing. Being a prodigy in profiling and forensics, he was on the police force at the time. He was put on the team investigating the Beast."

Will was getting all sorts of good news today, wasn't he? The Ripper had noticed him, The FBI suspected nothing of sweet, damaged Will Graham, and this new support was eating up these carefully constructed lies. Doctor Lecter looked over at Will, and with shining eyes, Will starred back.

"He went into the Bayou, trying to find the Beast's den, but he got caught. The Beast stabbed him and would have done worse if Will hadn't pushed him into the water. We thought the Beast was dead but we've had three bodies that say he's here. In Baltimore."

Will let a false tear run down his face. He remembered the day he tied his knife to a tree, running into it so the wound didn't appear self inflicted. He had been looking for a way to get out of the investigation. People had gotten too close for their own good. He smiled.

"And now he's trying to find the Ripper," Will exclaimed, letting the true joy in his voice out in such a way that it sounded like shock.

"Jack this is why I like my privacy! He's a vengeful killer and I saw him!" Will allowed fake panic to colour his voice, almost to the verge of hysteria. Doctor Lecter, seeing his new project panicking, decided to chip in.

"Will. I recommend you calm down. The FBI can keep you safe. It's their job. If you work yourself up you will only suffer more than you need to."

Coming from a support that was either the most or least comforting advice Will had ever heard.

The room remained silent as Will slowed his breath, his false sobs almost turning into laughter at the overwhelming sense of power he felt.

"I know it's a lot to ask but we need to catch him. Will you know that we need to catch him," Jack was pleading.

Will would let him for now. He wanted to watch Jack squirm like the snake he was. Calming his shaking breath further, Will curled into himself. Wrapping his arms around him, as close to the fetal position as could be achieved while standing. Knowing Jack, the profiler would take it to mean he was hiding shame and fear rather than hiding the genuine joy of so many interesting things coming up at once.

"How do you know it's him?" Will whispered, not trusting himself to sound traumatized at a normal volume of voice. He was like a kid on Christmas. He knew so much more now and this time he wouldn't have to stab himself. He missed the thrill.

"He left your glasses on the latest victim, Will. The ones that went missing the day he stabbed you. We thought it was a copycat but we know it's him now." Jack thrust a picture of the latest animal towards Will. He had turned him into a scene from a fairy tale, leaving little bits of straw in his throat and chest. A little pig for the Ripper.

Looking at the rest of the pictures, Will unspokenly agreed to the case.

"He's mocking us. He's saying that no matter what we build the profile out of he's ahead of us, ready to make us eat out words. He's saying it's as flimsy as straw."
Jack was writing every word down with the relived speed of a man who had found an oasis in the desert. Jack hoped Will would be his oasis in this case. Clear and real.

"If that is all I would like to set up a meeting with Will," said the suit clad man.

"Of course. You two set that up. " Jack replied, more interested in the case than either of the men sat before him.

"How about dinner tomorrow?" Hannibal asked, seeming to raise his eyebrows in such a way that Will almost felt like he was being flirted with. He almost rolled his eyes. It seemed that this man was nothing if not bold with bad timing.

"I'm more of a breakfast guy, Doctor. How about we meet up then?" Will replied. This man was charming, no doubt, but Will had bigger fish to fry. He had unavoidable plans for that evening.

"Very well. And you can call me Hannibal, doctor sounds too clinical for an unofficial support."

A tiny grin graced Will's lips.

"Wonderful. I'll see you at nine tomorrow, Hannibal."

With that, Will left the bright office and descended into the shadows that clung to the BAU’s halls like so much smoke to a chimney. Tomorrow seemed promising. He couldn't wait to send the Ripper another gift.

# The Hunt

The one good thing about having a dad who worked long hours fixing things was that you had lots of access to large books on fixing things. Will had been studying mechanics and engineering since he realized that these were the only books they would ever have in the house. His father was gone sunup to sundown on a short day, and they lived a life of strained comfort. They fished so they had full stomachs. Will's father worked himself to the bone for paid electric bills, and clean clothes. They still didn't have money to spend on anything they didn't need. After getting over the initial disappointment of not having hot wheels as a kid, Will found the actual workings of cars to be much more interesting.

By fifteen, Will was amazing at repairs and restorations fixing everything from lawn mowers to Ford pickups. Using his knowledge of sticking broken pieces together until something sensible emerged, Will had managed to reassemble a vehicle for himself, a sanctuary. At the start it was mostly a rusted junkyard heap but now it had some spray paint and cheap sealant on it too. He'd had to start tinkering like his father to pay for the insurance but since anything was easier than finding free scraps for a shitty truck restoration, Will was doing well.
The back of Will's truck had been turned into a makeshift workshop the moment he finished it, tools lay scattered everywhere. There were wrenches and hammers and saws, some smaller parts for the truck littering the ground along with some soda cans and a bag of popcorn. Will wasn't going to use any of those things tonight. He had a plan. He had an aim and it involved rope and a picture frame.

Sitting in a rusting, neon blue ford on the small gravel driveway, Will planned. He fumbled with the radio wishing that the damn thing would work with all the rain clouds around, hoping that Clarity would be quick. He was waiting for inspiration to strike. He was waiting for Clarity to come out with her bag. Mostly he was waiting for headlights to come up behind him and announce the presence of Clarity's brother. He wanted to get a good look at the smug bastard before making him admit what he did.
Six months had passed since that day on the bridge. Half a year to plan. Will had done so much to prepare.
A creak at the wooden porch was followed by a flag of yellow as Clarity and her rain jacket left the small house. She came out of the front door just as her brother turned onto the small path. Will had his headlights on and he saw her eyes widen, fear filling them and he felt the urge to snarl well up in his chest. The tall man walked towards Clarity, slinking like a sick dog. Something on his face must have changed because Clarity looked over at Will and she ran. She took large steps towards the truck, sneakers slipping and sticking in the mud. Her brother was still wearing his construction boots, the grip allowed him to barrel towards her. Clarity swung the door open, breathing heavily while hauling herself into the passenger seat and pulling her faded backpack in out of the rain. Her brother had nearly caught her.

"Drive, Will." She said looking at her brother's face through the window. He was enraged, yelling, but Will couldn't hear a word because of the rain.

"Give me a second," Will said, putting the truck into reverse. He had to go fast. Clarity's brother, Gabe, was already getting into his own car, attempting to block the road which was

barely big enough for two vehicles. In a feat of pure insanity, Will managed to turn onto the side path before he could be stopped. Will turned to face the exit on the main road but when he tried to drive away, he only heard the sound of tires spinning in the mud. Will realized he'd have to push the truck to get it going. He had planned to come back in the later hours of night while Clarity slept but he would have to settle with... 7:12, according to the clock in his truck.

Thank god Clarity knew how to drive.

"Get in the driver's seat, Clarity. I'm unsticking you," Will yelled, trying to be heard over the squeaking tiers, thunder above, and the engines roar. He opened his door and was drenched in rain within seconds of leaving the vehicle.

"What about you, Will? He'll kill you!"

She was still listening to Will as she feared for his life. She pulled herself in front of the wheel and put her foot over the gas, ready to step on it. She trusted him so much, it almost made Will tear up.

He closed the door and she unrolled the window, waiting. Her brother's car was getting closer, almost blinding Will with the headlights as he ran towards the bed of the truck.

"Go!" he shouted, pushing as hard as he could against the suction of the mud. This was the only way for Clarity to get away.

With a sudden burst of speed the truck launched forward, turning into the empty main road with the loud sound of rubber on wet asphalt. Will nearly fell into the puddle of mud, catching himself with cat like reflexes. He turned to face the animal's car, only when he made eye contact did he run back towards the house. Quickly darting past the car, Will reached the porch before his prey had a chance to turn the car. He slammed the door open and went towards the back door, waiting with it open. The moment he heard Gabe's steps he ran out, going behind the door. Gabe went to follow him, running out into the pouring night, turning towards the sound of a snarl.

He nearly laughed at the shrimp. He looked like he couldn't lift a hammer.

'If this kid wants to fight he must be dumber than a rock,' Gabe thought.

Then Will pounced. The rope in his hands wound around his prey's neck. Fists we're flying at his face but he didn't care, only pulling harder on the rope in his hands. Gabe fell to his knees, still pulling at Will's hands weakly.

Will pushed until his prey was laying in the mud, Will astride his back, pinning his weakening form.

"Tell me what you've done," Will snarled, letting all his rage out. Only a soft whimper and a shudder came from Gabe. Vision fuzzy, he tried to raise his head, only to feel it being pushed back down.

Will watched as blood ran out of Gabe's nose. He grinned as he saw it stain his rope where it cut into the flesh.

"I know anyways. It doesn't matter if you don't tell me," whispered the voice.

Everything went black for Gabe, his vision blurring and his eyes closing. He wasn't dead by he would never wake up again. At least not anywhere worth waking up.

Will climbed off of the downed creature, before without much effort, dragging him to his own car. Hauling the larger man into the passenger seat, Will started to drive out, following back roads deeper and deeper into the bayou. He would kill his prey among the other beasts. He had to dispose of the body and he still had a picture frame to use.

# Hannibal is Run Over by Dogs

The next morning felt very far away when Hannibal laid himself down to sleep. Will was very strange. Rare and intriguing in a way that made Hannibal want to collect him like an antique tea set. He saw something lurking in the eyes of the defensive man that made him nearly giddy. Which was troubling for many reasons the least of which being that he was currently courting with another killer. One who had tried and failed to slaughter Will. At the thought of his counterpart an involuntary shiver almost went through Hannibal's spine. The Beast. What a beautifully fitting name. He was amazed at the skill and near childish glee that permeated all of his well crafted work. Hannibal supposed that he must have been killing since his youth to achieve such an effect. A smile escaped him at the thought of how Will would play into such a game. The Beast was a jealous creature, who would likely destroy Will. There must be so many murders unattributed to their true master. A plan formed. Hannibal would use Will as bait, he would get Will trusting and vulnerable and invite the Beast to destroy and, ideally, consume his only escaped prey. He could collect Will like this. He could create something that the monster he sought to know could not refuse. Then, together they would reveal all they had done. They would make sure that everyone knew of each kill. That everyone would see what they had so artfully created. That they would be credited for their lost works. Hannibal was grinning as he went to sleep. It was soon that he would leave another message for his counterpart.

Hannibal had never imagined that Will would have cooked for him, so it was a shock when he parked and was hit by the scent of breakfast foods. And then he was hit by a dog, which sent his protein scramble flying. Will looked at him through the kitchen window. Hannibal could not believe that this was his morning, he was the Chesapeake Ripper for god's sake! He was not the kind of man who had his breakfast stolen by mutts and was then quietly laughed at through a window! He wished he had planned it. He wished he could convince himself that he was merely trying to get Will Graham to think he was an incompetent mess, but he reasoned that lying to himself would only make things worse.
Hannibal was happy to see that Will had stopped whatever he had been doing other than laughing, to come outside and help him up. Polite. Maybe Hannibal wouldn't eat him.

"I have a few people over for breakfast, just so you know. We meet once a week and it was my turn to provide breakfast and previous obligations take precedent and all that," Will said with a smile.

"Of course. I understand completely," said Hannibal, following Will's lead into what must have been the dining room. It was not lavish like his own tastes but Hannibal appreciated its rustic charm and cozy feel.

"Hannibal, meet everybody, everybody meet Hannibal," said Will, making a sweeping motion to the three figures sitting at his table.

"Pleasure to meet you," said Hannibal, reaching out to shake the man's hand. the other man reached back, careful not to hit the carafe of orange juice that was in front of him.

"You as well. Name's Garret Hobbs."

"If you can all introduce yourselves, I have to attend to the pancakes," Will said, hurrying off.

"My name is Louise, and this is Abigail," said the woman at the end of the table. She was polite as well. Will had decent taste in company it seemed.

"Saw that with the dogs earlier," said the girl.

Maybe his tastes were off after all.

"Yes, I was indeed caught by surprise. Do your dogs always come with you for breakfasts?" he asked, grinning. Abigail laughed and replied that all the dogs were Will's. Just then Will entered, carrying a stack of pancakes, some sausage, and scrambled eggs with tomato and spinach. Hannibal wasn't impressed. He was grateful. Not at all impressed by the almost polite man with the many dogs and the absolutely delicious pancakes.

Will placed the large plates down before sitting down himself. He was at one end of the table facing Mrs. Hobbs, and next to Abigail. Hannibal had a side of the table to himself as well.

"Sorry about the dogs. I should have warned you that they're basically bloodhounds, or blood sausage hounds anyway."
Hannibal chuckled. Oh god he was going soft. He definitely wasn't impressed by the mans awful joke. Abigail rolled her eyes.

"It's no trouble at all," he replied, deciding that he wouldn't want that Tupperware back anyways. Dog slobber was not a spice he utilized in his kitchen.

Soon everyone was eating pancakes, idly chatting about boat repair and mechanics, or about an upcoming fall dance. Everyone except Hannibal. He was observing how different Will seemed to be at home. It was as though he were a small fish, uncomfortable going against a shark alone, but more than able if he had his school with him.

"Can you please pass the eggs, Unc'."

Wait what.

"Here you go Abi," Will replied, not phased by the title in the slightest.

"So you are related?" Hannibal asked inquisitively, doing his best to seem innocently curious.

"Well not really, but Will is basically family," Abigail replied.

"He got us out of a bad situation a few years back and he's been a close family friend ever since," said Garrett.

"Oh Garret you know he's family," said Louise, turning to Hannibal, "Garret insisted that Will be named Abigail's godfather after he helped us."
Hannibal reconsidered Will. Maybe he was not a fish in a school. Perhaps he was a wolf in a pack.

After pancakes were over the Hobbs' moved into the living room, while Hannibal and Will remained in the dining room, sipping coffee.

"He did that to you didn't he? The Beast?" asked Hannibal, pointing to Will's left eye. He was bringing up a sore subject innocently to see how Will reacted. The three scars didn't look sore, but they must have been at one time.

"Yes. Yes he did," Will replied, acting as though the mere thought of a scratch like this would make him shiver, "I think it makes me look rather rugged though," he continued, smiling toothily and laughing a little.

Hannibal was at a loss for words, though nobody other than himself would ever know it.

"I can't help but agree," he replied.

Will Graham was not impressive. Nope. Not a bit, even if he did make amazing pancakes.

# The Kill

Will had decided long ago that Clarity was something worth protecting. Even with her hard exterior and angry glares, Clarity was too kind to leave behind. She had a heart so full of love. It was also full of rage, hatred, and a tendency towards drinking Will's father's whiskey, but Will didn't really mind. He thought quietly to himself about all of the ways he'd seen her hurt. He'd helped her with science notes when her arm had been broken by "a fall", he'd checked the coverage on her black eye before the spring dance in freshman year, he'd even held her in a hug when she told him about the cigarette burns. He was going to make this man pay, dearly.

After driving a fair ways away from the house that had once been a cave for a bear of a man, Will lugged his still unconscious body into a boat. Nobody was there to watch him slip further into the bayou but he covered the man in a tarp anyways. The sight of gators eyes in the water calmed him. They glowed like stars in the water, yet they never approached him, never attempted to burn him with their teeth. They knew he was like them, a beast imitating an innocent piece of wood simply caught in the current, only to be revealed by the dark. He was drawn from his thoughts by a quiet groan from the bottom of the boat. He grabbed a wrench and swiftly knocked Gabe back into Morpheus' waiting arms. He had practiced that move more than once on a mugger. He had been practicing looking innocent and unable to defend himself and two rather experienced looking men tried to exploit that. Will was however, neither innocent nor defenseless. He also had his hands around a rather sturdy metal pipe from a boat that he'd been disassembling, which they somehow, didn't notice. It had gone quite well for him, though less so for the muggers. They had been left alive, pockets empty, But one of them had scratched Will first. Not enough to scar him, but enough to bleed. Claw marks from a beast.

Finally, Will arrived at his destination. A shack that lacked glamour, running water, and heating of any kind sure, but it was his. His prey was bleeding from a wound above his eyebrow, the bruise was already the size of Will's fist and he let out a small chuckle of pride at his work. Gabe was drug into the shack with no small amount of effort on Will's part. Once the man was past the door frame Will went about turning the generator on, then the lamp, and then the small space heater and microwave. What was a good hideout without snacks? He was a beast but he was also a teenage boy. Then Gabe was secured to the chair. He'd realized that same morning that he only had one in the place, but he didn't have time to get another before Gabe woke up. Thick chains were wrapped around his arms and legs, then ropes. Then he was blindfolded. Will filled the bucket to the left of the door with swamp water.

"Cold water," said Will softly to himself, "is an amazing alarm clock."

With that he tipped the bucket and with no more ceremony, Gabe was awake. He of course tried to move, to escape, to bargain, screaming all the while. Will laughed at the pathetic attempts.

"Scream. I dare you."

The boyish, sing song voice sent a chill up Gabe's spine. He could recognize it but he couldn't place it. Who had he been fighting? Why did his head hurt so much?

"Who the hell are you? Is this about Clarity? What did that little bitch do this time?"

His voice was grating. Will wasn't paying attention to what he was saying.

"I don't really think you're in the position to ask me anything."

The sound of a lighter flicking on filled the shack.

"You know, I don't smoke. I think it's a disgusting habit. Ruins the lungs, but I think that this pack was worth every penny. Tell me if I'm right."

Will held Gabe's hand down and extinguished the smoke on his cuticle. Gabe screamed. Cigarette after cigarette was put out on each fingertip until his nails were burned away and bleeding. He passed out from pain as Will used a toothpick to scrape away the cauterized portions of each fingertip, only to be woken up again by another deluge of water. After another heaving breath, Gabe had stopped screaming. Will was not impressed by this in the slightest. This man had hurt not just his friend, but he had hurt others as well. Will saw violence in Gabe's scarred knuckles, could imagine every seedy woman from a seedy bar that had been on the receiving end of these fists when the poor advances of such a moronic brute didn't capture their attention. This was now way for anyone to behave. It was no way for anyone who claimed to raise a child to behave especially. Will picked up the picture frame.

Gabe was suddenly able to see as the soaking, algae covered blindfold was pulled down around his neck. It was that scrawny friend of Clarity's.

"That little bitch! She put you up to this, didn't she?! Didn't she!?!"

He was yelling, anger and fear colored his face an ugly mottled red. Spittle flew off of his lips and he looked disgusting. Abusive. Human. Worthless. He would have lived if he had been a match for Will in strength. Or cunning. Or anything at all. But Gabe was none of those things and Will let out a soft, happy sigh, directly contradicting the rage on his face. This man, who was nothing to him, would soon be nothing to everyone else. Will didn't say another word to Gabe for a long time, rather, Will picked up an extension cord and beat Gabe with it until he had bruises in all of the places Clarity had them. Will was nothing if not generous and decided that Gabe had proven himself to be worth an extra beating. After that, Will got out his knife. Carefully, slowly, deliberately, he carved three long, deep cuts into his prey's face, making sure to cut through his left eyelid each time. Gabe was going to be changed, made into something more useful. He would become a better parent. A better man. A beast.

"I'll kill her for this. She told you about everything didn't she? She sent you after me! You're insane!"

Gabe was bleeding profusely and Will had finally decided that it was time to use his frame. He turned away from Gabe and toward the wall of tools, grabbing a small hand saw. Gabe shivered, swollen left eye unable to see. Will grinned as the saw shone in the light. He had never thought it would feel this good. He was serving justice. Poetic justice, making a story out of an impolite, undeserving, loathsome man.

“No. She didn’t. Nobody did, and nobody knows where you are. They never will.”

Will cut away one of the shorter sides of the frame, leaving two sharp wooden points. He then just waited, watching Gabe squirm in his seat as he was circled. Finally Will grew tired of walking, tired of hearing the pathetic whimpers of his prey. He hoped that Clarity would appreciate this, even if she never saw it. Gabe didn’t need to be revealed, everyone already knew he was scum and never did a thing about it. Will would change that though, Clarity would never need to hide from her brother again.

“Tell me Gabe, do you like bulls? I like them quite a bit. They’re not the most loving of creatures but they provide some very fine meat. Unfortunately they aren’t the best of fathers.”

Gabe was looking at the frame with horror as his concussed brain tried to make sense of the insane words Will was giving him.

“I-I like bulls! Yeah! They’re my favorite! In fact I wanted to be a cowboy when I was a kid! Me and Clar-“

Gabe choked on his words as the small hand saw was pressed against his throat. Little beads of blood ran down his neck like rubies.

“Don’t you DARE act like you care about her!” Will hissed.

“ But I do! I do ca-“

Will struck, a long gurgle coming out of Gabe’s mouth as he choked on his own blood. Will relished the smell of iron as he kept hacking away and his prey’s throat. This was not just for Clarity’s sake anymore, and he realized it never was. He had simply put to much work in for this to be a simple gift, he had spent so much time imagining sliding a blade through a throat. The teeth on his saw made it harder than expected to slice cleanly so he had to slide the blade back and forth, until Gabe stopped shaking.

Hours passed and after the sounds of drills and squelching and bones cracking were done, Will hauled his finished work out of the shack, and toward a nearby tree. He had staked this place out for long enough to know that nobody would find it.

Covered in blood, Will used the ropes and chains from the chair to hoist his Minotaur upwards, lashing it onto the tree like some sort of horrible scarecrow. Gabe’s corpse was defiled. Through his nose was a screwdriver, a postmortem septum piercing, and through his head was a picture frame, each end of it pointing towards the 2 am sky. Will closed his eyes and let the pendulum drop, before dunking himself into the freezing water, as if to wake up who he used to be. Will Graham never truly woke the same again, he woke with blood under

his nails, and glee in his smile. The boat ride back was calm, and not even the gators would meet his eyes.

# Sausage and Secrets

Chapter Summary

The title is misleading.

Will calmly collected the plates and silverware from the table and waved at the Hobbs' through the kitchen window as they piled into a silver car. As the last glint of their vehicle rounded the corner back onto the main road, Will turned around.

"So… onto business," Will said, a grave tone entering his voice, one mixed ever so slightly with false fear. He knew how to wear this mask well, which was only fair as he had been building it since the first visit to a therapist for his "traumatic stabbing".

Hannibal in the meantime was still contemplating tasting the sausage. He didn't necessarily like the idea of eating someone else's meat but… it would be rude not to after he'd taken the two sausages.

He took a bite.

"Oh my," he breathed out. It was unmistakable, this was long pig.

Could William possibly be so daring? So like him? He had to know.

"Who's sausage?" he asked keeping his tone light but with an imperceptible implication of knowing.

Will froze up, arms going stiff. Froze like his home in the winter. Froze like the body of a man who locked their child outside. Will had no patience for abusers.

"Garret made it, why? Is there something wrong? He said he made it three days ago so it should be good" he stated, sounding like someone who hadn't been serving up human sausage as best as he could. So well in fact, that even Hannibal Lecter was fooled. Unfortunate. That was the only word Hannibal could apply to Will's lack of knowledge about what he served. He was however not disappointed to eat the second sausage.

"I was simply wondering if you made it. I am a culinary man and I have a tendency to collect any good recipe I find. I work with the mind and the body. It helps me to feel balanced," He said conversationally.

'Oh thank god', thought Will. He did not say that however, rather he began to talk about work. Specifically, he talked about the Chesapeake ripper.

“You know,” Will said, sipping his third mug of coffee,” I think his work, while horrific, is rather symbolically sophisticated. We already know he’s intelligent, obviously he has to be to have gone so long without being caught, but I think it’s more than that. The profile says that he’s a lone wolf, a man cut off from the world. I think that’s bull.”

“Oh?” said Hannibal, pretending that he was only paying the socially acceptable amount of attention to what Will was saying.

“I think he’s in touch with the world to a terrible degree. He is so close to everything and so aware of humanity and life and his own mortality. Like how artists are aware of their subjects,” Will almost let his voice go dreamy as he thought about the latest picture the Ripper had painted for him.

“Are his victims his subjects?” Hannibal asked, the room suddenly seeming darker and warmer. He definitely likes having his ego stroked; he’d at least admit that much, if only to himself.

“They’re paint. His subject changes, sometimes it seems to be god, or morality, or a self portrait. Lately though he seems to be doing commissioned works.” Will tried his best to seem tense as he said this. He was supposed to be a sensitive topic for himself, which was just a constant reminder of how much stranger his life was than most other killers.

Though to be fair, he only knew Garret well personally.

“Ah yes,” Hannibal said quickly, recomposing himself, eager to press the topic of his recent pen pal.

“The Beast,” Will said softly, nodding.

“What do you think of him?” Will asked, struggling to keep the hopeful, praise hungry, tone out of his voice.

“I think he is child like. Not immature but… fanciful. He likes kids, though not in anyway unsavory. He may be a parent or have lived through abuse as a child. He is somewhat protective of children in general, as though he lives in an ideal world where he can save innocence and retroactively pay for his sins.”
Will had to admit that the doctor was good. It was refreshing to meet a competent psychiatrist after so many incompetent quacks.

“Why do you say that?”

“Twenty of his victims were accused of child abuse, and another four for spousal abuse. Others were seemingly random. He’s impulsive and bold, as well as keenly intelligent. A sensitive psychopath, much like the shrike, though I have some doubts that he is truly as brazen in his everyday life as the profile suggests.”

Will liked the doctor quite a lot. He was proud of his work on the shrike. He’d managed to convince Jack that a group of unidentified bodies on a burnt down farm were the shrikes victims. He’d met Garret during that case, and only knew who he was because he decided

that it was worth having another mind in his skull to help someone else out. Since he'd been identified as a strong suspect, Garrett had gladly provided him with bones and hair from each girl, which he planted at the "Shrike's" farm before burning it down. The case was declared closed and Garrett began taking weekend trips away from home while Abigail and Will chose someone for him. They acted as each other's alibi's and with Louise's unwitting help, had very successful, unsuspecting, "fishing" trips. It was always a nice moment when his friend saw whoever they'd managed to snag from a dark alley or nearby city. Garrett said he missed the hunt but that he was more than happy to trade the hunt for a nice weekend trip and a surprise when he got home.

"Plus, it's a good bonding opportunity for Will and me," said Abigail. Will really liked the kid. She reminded him of himself when he was that age, right down to the gleam in her eyes and her love of opening up chest cavities.

"And the chest cavities?" he asked, shaken from his trance by the sound of Hannibal pouring coffee. He must have been lost in thought…

"I think he developed that one over time. It takes great strength to open up a chest and his earlier kills have always struck me as being well planned and executed, except for the chest cavity. He was unsure of that at first. The hesitation marks are visible, but just barely, and only if you look for them. He turns his victims into animals and dioramas, but perhaps he just likes blood and process. Some of them were opened up anti-mortem after all. He has violent delights, but he is truly… playful in his work."

Will was not blushing. He was hiding his face because he was pretending to be concerned about the fact that "The Beast" was so violent.

"Why did he come after you? Any bad math in your book, Will?" Hannibal asked. He was genuinely hoping not, he liked Will and it would be rather unfortunate if he had to kill him right then.

"I caught him. I found his hideout and he wanted to make sure I disappeared. I'd never hurt a kid though. I saw too many kids get hurt…"

"You were a police officer. Was it the domestic violence division?"

"I worked as a beat cop for a while in New Orleans; I got called to enough domestic disturbances to disturb anyone. I may hate the guy, but I can't really claim that the world was a better place with a few of those people in it."

Will didn't mention that a few of those disturbances were caused by his victims. He was careful, never became the official arresting officer and he changed partners as new and old cops were phased in and out of the force or precinct. This was allowed because he was just about the friendliest guy on the force, well liked, but not memorable. No one had any way of knowing that he'd ever met the victims personally.

Hannibal was intrigued at Will's begrudging approval of The Beast's morals, however.

“No bad math in either of us then. We’re just alike; nothing for us to feel bad about when we lay down to sleep at night.”

“None at all,” Will agreed.

They were both lying.

Hannibal smiled, taking another sip of his coffee, observing the way that the light from the living room window turned will’s hair into a brown and gold cloud of curls around his head.

“I am going to comb my hair before we leave,” Will said, obviously addressing Hannibal’s less than subtle look at his mane. This gave Hannibal a small pang of embarrassment; not only for being caught staring at Will, but also for the thought of touching his hair that occurred soon after Will mentioned combing it. The image of fingers combing through those messy locks flashed in Hannibal’s mind; Hannibal’s fingers. Oh lord what was this day? First he’d been bowled over by dogs, and then had had some interesting sausage, and now he was thinking of touching the, admittedly soft looking, hair of a man he’d met barely even two days ago.

Hannibal had never thought chaos could be so pleasant.

“Let’s head to the crime scene.”

“I agree,” said Will, pausing to think before adding, “feel free to have the extra sausage, it’s the least I can do after the dogs stealing yours.”

Hannibal thought about all the slobber seven dogs could make and cringed.

“Perhaps you could be so kind as to lend me some of your Tupperware?”

# A Fool in Love

As they began the long ride to the latest crime scene, Will and Jack were tense. They were both too anxious to get there, though each for different reasons. Will was eager to be at the scene, while Jack wanted to catch the sick bastard that had done this. Hannibal was sitting silent in the back seat, observing the tenseness in both men. For once, Will hadn't gotten to the scene before the police, which was unfortunate, seeing as the Ripper had left him a personal message. Abigail had said the Ripper was "sliding into his DM's", whatever that meant. Coordinates were left on the numbers on the last victim's briefcase lock. No one else noticed, as they were too busy paying attention to the fact that the man's fingers and toes were in his ears. Someone was a rather a bad listener it seemed. The trip was spent in silence. Jack was focusing on the road and Will was focusing on the countryside that lined the road around them.

The scene was grisly. That is, if it was Jack's opinion you were after. Will thought it was cute to the point of being rather funny. Like a child's card on Valentine's day.

"Not that I'm questioning your judgement, Jack," said Will, pretending to gag over the body,

"but why are we at one of the Ripper's crimes? Aren't I supposed to be investigating the Beast?"

"Well they've been leaving these for each other so I wanted to make sure we got this message before someone like Freddie Lounds could forward it to the press, we haven't even let out own people take photos unless I'm here personally. They still need to so hurry as much as you can." Jack replied.

"That's not how this works, Jack, I need time," Will huffed, "but that makes sense, cut off their communication and they'll be forced to come out into the open to "talk". One of them will make a mistake."

It was a beautiful scene. Will was tempted, as he had been at every one of the Ripper's gifts, to just let the pendulum drop and watch it happen over and over. It was a sweet scene, an obvious gesture of affection and wonder.

"I'm gonna clear the room so you can do your thing. Just… come and get someone when you're done. Bev won't interrupt, I've got Price and Zeller watching her this time."
Will hated how close Jack was to his face but he couldn't stop him without showing how touchy he had been lately. His glasses were getting fogged up from his own breathing without Jack's help.

As the sounds of Jack shouting died out, Will examined the scene. A man lay sprawled on a table in the wood shop. A large slice to his throat had killed him, but the most significant detail was that the only internal organ he still had was his heart. His eyes were gone and a careful look through the sockets revealed that even his brain matter was gone. Will looked closely at the incisions, admiring how utterly careful they were, as though the Ripper were

putting in extra effort to impress him. He looked closer at the mans mouth and saw that there was something there.

A piece of meat. It appeared cooked. It was his tongue, laying in his mouth, topped with a sprig of parsley.

That was it. He had to look closer, the way the Ripper knew he could.

The pendulum dropped, leaving Will suspended by a smooth voice. Watching his own hands perform these tasks.

“I am taking what I need from this man. I hold no qualms with him, in fact I found him pleasant. Otherwise he would not have been so lucky as to have my knife at his throat. I kill a man who is good, a sacrifice to a Beasts alter. I am blind in love, mindless in it. I feel gutted, but never heartless. I offer you sustenance in my words, and in an offering. I want you to take this, to consume, to be complicit in this. I want to know you know what the trophies are. I want you to prove your superiority to this man. I want you to eat him.”

Will shook himself out of the Rippers head and looked once more at the tongue. With great care, he put a gloved hand into the mans mouth. He’d eaten plenty of Garret’s cooking so this was a purely symbolic gesture, but he still took in the full experience. Was this what he wanted? To show the Ripper that he would accept him in this? To take such a personal gift?

Yes.

Will took the tongue and walked toward the back door of the shop, slipping out back where he wouldn’t be caught. It looked as though it belonged on a plate at a five-star diner.
He had to open his mouth wide, dropping his jaw to fit it between his teeth.

The taste of perfectly cooked meat, the way it melted in his mouth, spices mingling. Will moaned at the taste. Oh, once they met, the Ripper had to make him dinner.
He licked his lips.

Once he returned, Will took care to make sure there was no evidence of the Ripper. He hadn’t left fingerprints, hair, or any personal effects. He had left something for Will though. A brain hook. This was the kind of thing used in ancient Egypt to remove the brains of pharaoh's. Will thought fondly of the childhood obsession he had with the pyramids. He blamed his mother, a historian who filled her son’s head with stories of ancient civilizations. It had coordinates inscribed on the sides and brain matter on the end of it.

“A two for one special,” Will laughed to himself. He pocketed the artifact in an evidence bag. He could pretend he’d forgotten to hand it to Jack.
He heard a shuffling sound outside the door and Beverly burst in.

“Hey Will!”

“Bev! I’ve just finished up in here so it’s all good, come in!”

Will thought Beverly was underappreciated, so he did his best to make sure she knew he thought she did good work.

“Hear that Jack? He’s done!” Beverly shouted at the door. Jack seemed slightly out of breath, which wasn’t abnormal. Will found it a little amusing

Will told Jack all about how the Ripper was saying he was losing his touch, that he felt idiotic, that he felt gutless and cowardly, like he couldn’t speak his mind to the Beast. Jack listened intently as Will told him about how the Ripper felt embarrassed by his admiration of the Beast, most likely due to the perceived weakness any sort of positive emotion implies.

Will was so intent in his lies and Jack was so wrapped up in receiving them, that neither noticed a red headed figure sneaking up to the window and snapping some amazing shots. Hannibal in the meantime was considering his next move. He felt no regret over killing that furniture salesman. Brendan had been kind, helpful, and genuinely pleasant. Hannibal was only sorry for whoever would be employed in his place, as they would have a lot to live up to. If he was lucky miss Lounds had already taken a photo of the crime scene, one that would let him know whether his gift had been accepted or not. As though on cue, his computer notified him that there was a new article on Tattlecrime.com.

“Chesapeake Ripper Leaves Salesman Unfurnished”

‘Oh lord, that is a gaudy headline’ Hannibal thought, examining the pictures closely. He had to admit, she knew her composition, and that he knew cameras. He was glad that she was gracious enough to use the camera that an “anonymous admirer” had sent her. He read on, just to be sure that the pictures were exactly what they appeared.

*Brendan Jacobs, 46, has been found, butchered by the Chesapeake Ripper. The man went missing from his downtown apartment around four in the morning, according to police. The Ripper not only slit his throat, but also removed his eyes, internal organs, and tongue. None of these body parts have been located, and police officers say that they will be working under the new assumption that the body parts are being sold on the black market or being used for unethical experimentation. The press, however is smarter than that, and knows that the Ripper will continue his pattern of missing organs and limbs. This intrepid reporter will bring you all more as soon as she can. Remember, if you have a tip, send it to Tattle.Crime.com/Report.*

Shorter than he would have expected from Freddie, but all the same, Hannibal was ecstatic.

No tongue. The two best words in the English language as far as he was concerned. He imagined the Beast finding the gift, understanding it, enjoying it. He would see him tonight.

He pulled the piece of hay out of his desk drawer and took a long whiff. Wheat, jet fuel, metal and… apples.

The Orchard City Airport.

He would finally see the Beast’s face.

He laughed as he pulled on his suit, he would be well dressed for what was hopefully dinner theater.

# Coffee and Not Coffee

Hannibal re-entered his home seven hours later. He had taken the long drive to the Orchard city Airport, only to find that it was open and that there was not even one horribly mangled corpse for him to view, not even a landing gear accident or other mundane mangling of note. This meant that as he shuffled towards his room at three in the morning, he was not only disappointed, but aching with exhaustion as well. This led him to sleeping through his alarm, only to be filled with alarm as he realized that he would be late to the meeting.

“He doesn’t seem like the kind of guy to be late for work,” Beverly observed, sipping her cappuccino. Will agreed with her, he also thought that Dr. Lecter didn’t seem like the type to show up to work obviously tired and with hair still not dry from the shower but hey, Will wasn’t one to judge.

The two of them had been meeting up at least twice a week for lunch since Jack had first assigned them to work together on the shrike case two years ago. Will liked Beverly, liked her easy going demeanor, her insightful comments on their colleagues, and he definitely liked that she never brought up his past or his “trauma”. Beverly Katz never once treated Will like he was broken, and that suited the both of them quite well. The cafe two blocks from the main BAU offices had become their semi official spot, with its cheap but robust coffee and cushy chairs, they both thought it was fitting.

“He tries to look so put together, and yet he seems like a bit of a mess today,” Will said, smiling at the the memory of Hannibal slipping into that morning’s meeting late, looking not the least bit ashamed of himself.

“Like a tornado in a suit,” Beverly replied knowingly. Will laughed into his latte, spilling it on his shirt.

“Aw crap,” Will said, still laughing at Bev’s comment.

“You’re kind of weird ‘bout him, huh?”

Oh god she was wiggling her eyebrows at him. Will sputtered, sloshing more coffee onto his blue striped shirt.

“Beverly. No.” Not today. Or ever. He already had a suitor and that was enough for him.

“You like him.”

This was not a question, Beverly was stating this the way one might say that the sky is blue or water was wet. No way was he into his unofficial therapist, right? The thought of Hannibal wet from the shower crossed his mind. Will dropped his cup and it shattered.

Beverly shouted, “Ha!”

Just then, as if summoned by Will making a fool of himself, Hannibal Lecter entered the cafe.

They made eye contact for three seconds, Hannibal looking rather shocked seeing Will covered in coffee before the blond man broke their eye contact, heading to the counter. By the time Hannibal had his coffee and danish in hand, Will was gone and Miss Beverly Katz was sitting alone in a worn red leather armchair, looking as though she were holding back a laugh.

“Give Will my greetings,” Hannibal said, smiling pleasantly as he left the cafe.

She would.

Will’s shirt had gone almost translucent when the coffee touched it and Hannibal had to pause for a moment looking on in mild envy of Ms. Katz. He had not known that the two of them were in a relationship and actually, he corrected himself, he wasn’t envious at all. Not at all, even with the sight of Will’s rather impressive if coffee stained physique in front of him. He definitely did not admire the three scars that wrapped around Will’s rib cage, nor did he appreciate the multiple other markings he had. Not a hint of jealousy was had upon seeing that Will’s shirt collar had been hiding a hickey. Beverly was a very lucky woman, that much he could admit.

He turned away quickly. Hannibal was not blushing, merely red in the face due to the slight wind outside. Not that Will was there to notice when he turned around.

Will came back to the BAU building at one o’clock, taking a quick trip home to change into a less caffeinated shirt. This was a mistake, he decided when he saw the grin on Bev’s face. He groaned inwardly and prepared himself for the friendly onslaught that was in his near future.

“He sends “his greetings,” Beverly said, doing a horrible impression of Hannibal’s accent.

“Promise me you won’t do that when he’s around,” Will said, burying his face in his hands.

“You look fancy, he’ll like it,” she teased, flicking the collar of his white shirt before tugging on his black tie.

“I look like a intern getting ready for an interview,” he said laughing a little, pleased that she at least thought he looked good. Maybe Dr. Lecter would like this.

“I’d say you look more like a kid at his first high school dance or something,” Beverly laughed, ruffling his hair.

Hannibal walked over to the pair of them and somehow, Will did not blush when he made eye contact with the doctor. He was however, going to kill Beverley if she kept eyeing them both like that.

“Perhaps you would be so kind as to join me for breakfast tomorrow morning, Will. I missed a decent portion of the meeting this morning and I was hoping you would fill me in?” he asked, rather amused by Will’s facial expression.

“Of course Doctor,” he replied, still avoiding the ever increasing need to blush.

“Wonderful. How about the cafe tomorrow at seven?”

“Sounds great,” he replied, resisting the instinct to stammer like an idiot.

“See you then,” Hannibal said, turning away.

Will did blush when Beverly moved his collar up a little.

“Thanks,” he said with slightly more bite than he’d meant to.

“The bruise, dude,” Beverly said, fixing his collar again.

He was thankful. He remembered the embarrassment that gave him that bruise last week. Beverly had decided that he should ask for help to get things from high shelves at crime scenes after that, while Will had argued that anyone who collected bronzed baseballs was to blame.

“Careful with the “hickey”, Sport, ya’ might make him jealous,” she said.

Will’s hand flew to his neck and Beverly started to crack up.

Hannibal smirked.

That expression was unfair.

---

Hannibal slept quite well that night once he had checked the Orchard City website, seeing that the Airport was in fact open that night. Dark green silk pajamas and the softest sheets lulled him into a peaceful sleep.

Will was surrounded by dogs and the sound of wind whistling through the trees around his home. His cotton shirt and boxers were soft as he laid down and allowed sleep to embrace him.

His breath matched pace with an other’s and they both dreamed of an empty airport hanger. Each was unaware that they were seeing something so similar. The hanger was not empty for long and was soon filled with swirls of grisly art and wild beauty. The dream ended and each missed it once it was gone.

One dreamt of a steamy shower, wet hair, a fluffy red towel and a smirk. The lack of a red towel, and a few other things soon followed in an imaginative display of the powers of the unconscious mind. Hannibal was not privy to this dream. Instead he dreamed of curly hair, bruised necks, and scars.
There was no denying that both men had rather active imaginations. Hannibal was the first of the two to wake. Hannibal woke up craving coffee and… something that was not coffee.

Will also wanted something that was not coffee.

They were equally oblivious to the “not coffee” that the other wanted as they arrived at the cafe. They were both equally torn between which of the two dreams they had had last night

was best, though neither of them brought it up.

They each ordered a coffee and Will explained what Hannibal had missed at the last meeting.

They met up for breakfast the next day as well, though this time at the FBI headquarters. Their masks were horribly thick, but not unpleasant in appearance. Hannibal was playing the role of a man too high class for powdered eggs and Will was acting as though he was nervous about the serial killers he was supposed to be catching, while still being a pleasant and nonthreatening agent.

“Why’d you decide to show up Lecter?” Will asked jokingly as they seated themselves at an uncomfortable plastic table.

“I happen to be on call if they need an extra profiler, and as we both know, the Ripper struck again last night.”

“Yeah, seems like he’s impatient for a reply,” Will observed before continuing, “we’ll have to get hotel rooms seeing as how far he decided to go this time.”

“Maybe he’s feeling unsure?” Hannibal replied.

“I hope not…” said Will under his breath.

Hannibal gave him an odd look and so he busied himself with his eggs. Hannibal had not gotten anything to eat and was watching with a sort of horrified respect as Will ate the cafeteria food. Will was either very brave or very stupid, Hannibal decided as the man ate the eggs.

Will and Hannibal had spent more and more time around each other since the cafe. This included the visits they had in Hannibal’s office at the BAU headquarters. Will’s involvement with his new support was growing along with Hannibal’s own interest in Will. Will was intelligent enough to catch either the Ripper or the Beast if he really put his mind to it, and Hannibal had a growing respect for the jittery agent. Perhaps it was all the caffeine that made him so nervous.

“How you can stomach that I cannot tell,” Hannibal said shuddering slightly as Will sipped the coffee. Will smiled at the man’s fussiness. He found Lecter to be rather pleasant company, when he wasn’t being a snooty dork at least. He’d been dropping parts of his mask, he was friendlier to the man, a bit more genuine. He felt stable in this at least.

“How would you know how it tastes? You won’t even take a sip?” Will replied, laughing slightly at the indignant look on Hannibal’s face brought on by the thought of drinking that coffee. He pushed the cup towards him and

“How about this, I don’t judge your coffee and you don’t offer me any?”

“Deal,” said Will.

They went off to their respective jobs while Jack tried desperately to sort out hotel rooms in Lake Miakan city. He hated sporting events that coincided with murders.

There were not enough rooms.

# Hotels are not spacious

The scene was beautiful. A large dinner table had been set out as though for a date. Hannibal was admiring his own handiwork with a sort of distracted glow, one that could be mistaken for the soft fire of anger if you weren't paying close enough attention.

“Will, it’s all yours,”

The man had both of his arms ripped off and nailed to a wall, and then had a clock painted around them. Nobody except for Will had commented on the fact, or even noticed that the shape of his torso looked like a heart. He was admiring the ruby hue that painted almost every surface of the small truck stop. It was a red room and the swirling patterns on the walls were brush strokes. Each ended in a curl like a question mark. Will lifted his feet and noted how the blood was sticking to the plastic shoe covers he had worn. He told Jack that the Ripper was saying that they were running out of time, but he knew its true meaning was just a wonderfully executed question.

“Want to go out some time?”

The ripper was a self satisfied, love sick jokester and Will thought it was hilarious and endearing. Hannibal had paid close attention to Will’s reaction at the scene and more than once saw a spark of humour slip through the man’s sleep weakened defenses. He was thinking about Will as he rode back in the BAU van. He was thinking about Will and blood and Will’s chest. Again. He was keenly aware of the fact that Mr. Graham was asleep, pressed against his side, snoring softly. He was keenly aware of Will’s aftershave and of a strange sweet smell the man seemed to give off. He was not keenly aware of the moment he fell asleep and ended up resting his head against Will’s. Beverly smiled in the passenger seat, watching her mess of a friend in the rear view mirror. Jack was driving, Zeller and Price were having a sleepy yet heated argument about the value of male bees in the first row, and Lisa Wreaths had fallen asleep in the middle row, smearing her makeup all over Scott Laurent’s windbreaker. Scott was looking down at her with a tired acceptance.

Beverly shook Jack awake for the second time and decided she would have to drive for the rest of the trip. Will and Hannibal both settled into a dreamless sleep.
When they arrived at the Lake Miakan inn, the BAU team was exhausted. Beverly had to shake everyone awake and she felt like her mother, reminding everyone to grab their bags as they got into the hotel.

After pulling himself away from Hannibal Lecter at an incredible speed, Will had found the one unoccupied chair in the lobby. He was thinking about the Ripper. What would he be like in person? This artist who could cook and loved culture. He was almost giddy with the knowledge that he made a man who painted god feel like a lovesick comedian.That was five hours ago and they were just now pulling into a hotel. He sleepily drew a comparison between the Ripper’s sophistication and Hannibal’s. It made him laugh sleepily to himself. Will was tired and his mind raced as he planned and re-planned his reply to the Ripper.

Hannibal was impatient and over tired. He'd driven out here last night and was running on about two hours of sleep. He looked over briefly at Will to see that the man had fallen asleep again. Beverly was chatting with Price and Zeller while the crime scene photographers flirted in a corner. Jack was at the desk, talking urgently to a woman working reception. Hannibal felt bad for her. This was probably not her ideal shift. Jack turned away, defeated, with a handful of key cards.

"Alright so… there's been an issue with the rooms.." Jack looked at his team. He held out room keys motioning at the team.

"Laurent, Wreaths, you'll have to share, Price and Zeller you two have to share as well. There are three more rooms and I'm getting one to myself, because I am the boss and this is one of the few jobs where perks are rare." Jack had a point.

Beverly looked from Will to Hannibal and back. Hannibal's eyes widened. She wouldn't.

"DIBS!," she exclaimed, quickly grabbing a magnetic room key and running off towards the elevator. Well. Shit. She would.
Hannibal went over to the sleeping agent and shook him awake.

"It looks like we'll be splitting a room, William," Hannibal said, hiding his own fear and hopefulness as best he could. The rest of the team had wandered off to their rooms.

"Uh huh…" Will replied, an odd expression on his face as he followed Hannibal to the elevator.

The room was bathed in a soft orange light from the streetlights and garish convenience store signs. Will had immediately set to taking a shower. Hannibal closed the curtains and turned on the bedside lamp. It registered a second later that there was only one bed. One bed. A twin sized bed at that. There were no armchairs and the floor looked incredibly uncomfortable. Hannibal decided he would deal with that when Will got out of the shower. He then decided that thinking about Will in the shower was just about the least productive thing he could do at that moment. He put his clothes into the drawers and changed into his pajamas. He had just finished sliding into the bed when he heard the water shut off and Will cuss quietly. The door to the bathroom opened, and a soaked head of curly hair poked out.

"Can ya' pass me a towel?" Will said, sounding far more alert than he had even in the elevator. Hannibal was about to get up him one when Will decided that being horribly distracting was a better plan.

"Never mind they're right here," he said reaching one arm around the door to grab a white towel off of the hook. The door came open as Will wrapped the towel around his front.

"Why's there one bed?"

"This was the only room left but I think we are both mature enough to share the bed. Do you toss and turn?"

Will was suddenly very aware of the fact that he was mostly nude and of how small the bed looked. This was less than ideal. Or more than ideal. Will couldn't tell. He started to dry his hair and quickly put on his boxers.

"I don't toss or turn. You can turn around now by the way," Will said, pulling his t-shirt on. Hannibal was wearing silk pajamas. They looked fancy, just as Will had expected. Will was the first to break the silence. He swallowed. Hannibal was trying not to stare at Will's throat, at where the faded hickey had been.

Will settled into the bed next to Hannibal

---

It was five in the morning when Will was awoken by a slight pressure on his thigh. Hannibal was lying curled around him and, much to Will's horror but not surprise, he was returning the gesture. They laid, facing each other, arms outstretched like two old friends yearning to embrace. Will went white as he realized arms were not the only thing outstretched. Quietly as possible he headed to the bathroom, hoping a cold shower would help. It didn't.
Hannibal awoke to the sound of running water and the distinctly familiar feeling of slightly damp silk. Dreams were the bane of his existence, he decided, getting his hair products out of is bag in preparation of a good rinse. Will exited the bathroom, looking chilled.

"I was unaware you showered so often, no judgement, as I am sure the hotel will have enough hot water left for me," Hannibal said, voice far too joyful for a man who had just about rubbed off on a colleague in his sleep.

" Yeah... Hot water..." Will said, silently wishing he'd just taken a warm shower to deal with his situation. He then made the mistake of looking back over his shoulder at Hannibal, who was now undressing... with the bathroom door open.

Will left the hotel room.

# Hang(er) Man

Will was getting tired of waiting for his prey to show up, so he was delighted when he heard a door open somewhere in the hanger. He paused, just long enough to hear the heavy breathing of the pilot. He was glad to have this opportunity, this chance to pay the beast back. The pilot had been given several DUI's in the past while and somehow hadn't lost his license. Will smelled a rat, and laid a trap accordingly. The pilot called out

"Hello? Moira? Beautiful I'm sorry I had to reschedule. I'm here now,"

Hannibal walked into the building for the fourth night in a row. It would be tonight. It had to be tonight, he was getting antsy. He had ceased looking for a good place to watch from, having already decided on the rafters. With practiced ease, he shimmied up the ladder and to one of the overhead maintenance platforms. He'd have a perfect view from here, leaning slightly over the edge to watch the scene unfold below him. The hanger was not so large that he needed a second, backup spot to watch from, but not small enough to leave him feeling exposed suspended in midair. With wondering eyes and a wandering mind, Hannibal waited, not even noticing as Will entered the hanger through a side door, cloaked in black, carrying a grey duffel bag. He did notice however, when a voice called out and footsteps filled the room. Heavy ones, as though the legs responsible were full of lead or ale. Was this him? A beast?

Will listened as boots echoed around the cavernous space, large and domed, sheet metal meeting steel beams over and over to form a frame the dim light of emergency exit signs and moonlit skylights bathed the hanger in a sunrise of colour. It was art. A bird in flight would soon live here, one sinless, one who did not endanger, a bluebird in a ribbed cage.

The pilot stepped into the open of the hanger and Will took a good look at him. The most noticeable thing was the hair, it was red, greying at the temples, though from age or stress, Will could not say. He was tanned as well, showing his time abroad in his freckled face and sun wrinkled hands. He had worn the uniform, as "Moira' had requested. A single pilot just learning about online dating was almost child's play to convince of a meet up. Will shuffled behind his box and pressed the button.

"Over here, baby."

It was a cheap trick, as in it had cost Will maybe ten bucks at most. A woman's voice and a small speaker were predictably effective tools against soused, horny, eager, men. He'd reused this one for the past four years and not once had it failed him. As expected, Seth Lewinski went towards the voice. Will pounced.

Hannibal watched, entranced as the Beast came out of nowhere, a knife in hand. He watched as the man below him was dragged at knife point into a shadowed corner, where crates of bolts and aerodynamic sheets of metal were stored. It was beautiful, the sound of a snarling voice sent shivers up his spine and Hannibal wondered how he could have ever mistaken this lesser prey for the predator he was there to witness. A cleverly laid trap, simple and effective. No grandeur was needed aside from that which the Beast brought on his own. He watched,

enraptured as a spray of blood coated the faded grey of the hanger floor. He had never felt his own pulse race quite like this. His dreams had been filled for the past four days with what the beast would be like to witness. He had almost thought to bring Will to his coordinates as a gift, just to see what it would be like. A dragging sound filled the hanger. The beast pulled the bleeding form of his prey to the center of the room, going back for something in the shadows. He was significantly slimmer and far more spry than Hannibal had expected. It was hard to see much more than that due to the hat and long black clothing. As the Beast pulled out a saw, Hannibal shifted.
Lord in heaven this man would be the death of him.

The platform creaked.

The Beast looked up, masked face illuminated by red light. Hannibal's breath caught in his throat.

Oh.

A creaking filled the hanger and Will paused. Whoever this was would either turn him in or keep watching. He couldn't risk it. Couldn't risk looking up. A figure surrounded by moonbeams was looking down.

Without thinking Will let the pendulum drop. Friend or foe?

Oh.

"Please do not stop on my account."

Oh that voice. It was pleading, with breath quickening and a honey-amber accent thickening, slurring the words together like the purr of a large cat.

Will recognized that voice instantly. He pulled down his mask and dropped his knife, allowing it to clatter to the floor with a sound like a penny into the tip jar of a struggling waiter, welcome and unexpected. He deepened his voice a little before replying.

"No need to sit so far away anymore."

The figure descended the ladder and Will began to laugh a little, as though he was a teenager in front of a crush.
Hannibal was in a bit of shock. The numbness that coated his limbs was pleasant and soft as he watched the beautiful enigma in front of him explain itself.

"You put on an amazing performance. It is like watching Da Vinci painting again, reborn."
He watched as the Beast chuckled slightly, facing him.

Leaning down he would have missed this. This sharp man intensely moving, coating his hands in his prey with a little embarrassment. Hannibal found it sweet. The Beast was shy at his presence. It was a beautiful sight. With handfuls of intestine, the man rose walking towards the shadowed corner, blood dripping as he went. Hannibal heard the sound of organs hitting the sides of a cooler and when the Beast walked back, he had shed the long sleeve

shirt. Wearing tight black pants, a white tank top, and the mask. He was rather cut. Hannibal was not panting. Or thinking. Definitely not thinking anymore.

He tried to continue his work as planned, quickly shedding all embarrassment after seeing the look on the face he'd never expected. He almost felt sorry about concealing his identity but he wanted to build up the suspense. The mask was alligator skin, stitched and stretched into a beautiful face, orange plastic of some kind covering the eyes. it looked homemade. Hannibal found the worn nature and obviously cared for item charming. This was a man who was sentimental as much as he was vengeful.
With a practiced hand he placed the bird skeleton into the emptied cavity of his prey, spreading his ribs. Hannibal felt almost as though he should be silent, but instead said,

"A blood eagle, very fitting."

Of course it was, he had studied for this kill. Blue feathers made a bed around the body and pieces of broken glass made the pilot's uniform sparkle like the iridescent feathers of a jay or magpie. The jacket was torn open, sleeves out behind him like the broken wings of a bird, the hat remained in place. Will was sweating under the mask. Hannibal was watching, enraptured.

Will nodded curtly in agreement, not wanting to give himself away just yet. not until he was positive that Hannibal Lecter was the monster he so hoped he was.

"How was the tongue?" he asked. And just like that, there it was, confirmation, but still, Will held back, opting to lay the intestines around his artwork. A nest. Tonight wasn't the night for a reveal. He wasn't prepared. He only had a gift to give.

"Do you not speak? I do not wish to pressure you, only that your voice, or at least what parts of it linger in your work, has been singing to me so sweetly that I would love to hear the real thing again." Hannibal was in shock, he'd never seen such a spectacle of gore and art at once. The Beast was truly a master.

With the final touch finished, Will reached into his pocket, placing the little voice recorder into Hannibal's hands, before holding a bloody finger to his lips
With that Will grabbed his things, and with practiced speed, ran.

Hannibal wanted so badly to follow.

Instead he was forced to stand still as a flood light turned on in the hanger, and a woman screamed. In his shocked state he only managed to say.

"Well... This is not ideal for you."

# Some Kind of Killer

Will turned back at the sound of a shriek, greeted with the view of a woman standing at the door of the hanger. Well, this may as well happen. First the killer he's flirting with turns out to be his FBI prescribed therapist, which by the way, just confirms his theory that background checks are worthless, and now he's going to have to help get rid of another, unexpected, body. His legs are moving at such a speed back towards the hanger he can't feel them. Hannibal is preparing to walk over to snap her neck when a black clad blur flings himself into the room. If she was phased by the murder, she's absolutely floored by the man in an animal mask throwing himself at her. Hannibal turns off the floodlight.

"Who else is here?" Hannibal asks, watching as the beast presses his forearm into her throat. It isn't as elegant, but it's just as captivating than the beast's other work.

"No one! I was looking for Seth and found you standing next to his flayed corpse before being attacked by this nut job!" she gasped, pointing at Will.

She had spunk, he'd give her that. Unfortunately Will had a knife to the throat, so spunk wasn't really useful.

"So," Will said, voice lowered, and altered enough by the mask to be unrecognizable, "You need help with this?"

"Usually, no, but tonight I will take all I am offered, especially from you," Hannibal replied, voice full of meaning.

Together they loaded the woman's body into the trunk of Hannibal's car.

It was one of the more awkward car rides Will had ever been on, sitting in the passenger seat of a polished silver Mercedes, mask firmly on his face, hood up. He had to explain himself, but he wasn't… ready. Instead he answered the question he missed.

"The tongue was good, by the way…"

Hannibal looked over, careful to keep half an eye on the road.

"You'll have to cook for me some time."

"Seeing as you'd need to take your mask off to eat, I'd like that."

Hannibal was both impatient and understanding of the man. He wanted to take the mask off the face next to him, even if he got stabbed for his slight, he had the urge to know exactly who wore that face.

"Eager to see me undress?" Will said, laughing lightly and shimmying his shoulders. He was acting like a teenager. Not like he had acted as a teenager, but how he might have acted, if he'd had friends, confidence, someone worth shimmying his shoulders at. Things like that.

“You really are something, aren’t you?” Hannibal replied, voice warm and full of mirth.

They pulled into the garage of a borderline opulent house, taking care to pull in far enough that they could get their catch out of the trunk without hassle.

“The guest room is the first door on your right upstairs, perhaps it would be best if you go and clean up while I… make us a meal?” Hannibal said, a small smile growing as Will nodded, replying:

“It’s a date.”

---

He had never seen such a nice guest room, cloaked in soft sheets, plush towels, and his own private bathroom, besides that, he’d never seen so many essential oils and expensive soaps in his life. Careful to lock the bathroom door, Will undressed, shedding his mask. He looked at himself in the mirror, smiling at the blood that seemed to have clung to his hair.

“What do I even use?” he whispered to his reflection, before settling on one that claimed to be scented with “Tansy, Honeysuckle, and Ginger grass”. It was floral with a sweet, herbal smell, while the ginger grass lived up to its name with a kick of heat.

Rubbing his fingers through his hair, Will did not hear the sound of the guest room door opening, and then closing again soon after. It took a fair amount of time, but when he’d finally cleaned up, and soothed his stressed muscles, Will was ready.

It wasn’t a shock to see clothes laid out for him, seeing as Hannibal *would* do that, no what surprised him was that there was something missing… It was forgivable, plus the pants were soft enough that they weren’t uncomfortable, which was nice. They fit well, as they were both slightly taller than the average man. With a quick peek at his reflection, Will decided the mask might be a good idea.

---

Hannibal was busying himself in the kitchen, reducing wine and pasteurizing the blood, braising the meat, trying to pretend he hadn’t delivered the clothes conveniently forgetting any type of briefs. He hummed anxiously to himself as he pitted cherries for the sauce with one hand, and flipped the seared fillets with the other. So occupied, he was, that he didn’t notice his guest’s arrival.

Will stood at the doorway of the kitchen, mask in place, watching as Hannibal blended the sauce, cherry juice staining his fingertips. He was tempted to walk over and help Hannibal... clean up... but decided to take in the view first. Hannibal was wearing a long sleeve black sweater, and a pair of dark grey slacks, that were… well fitting.

Hannibal sived the sauce and turned to plate the dishes, a sprig of arugula placed on each as a garnish. His eyes widened at the sight before him. There stood the Beast, leaning nonchalauntly against the door frame, mask in place. The brownish green of the alligator skin complemented the light coral shirt, and matched the rest of the outfit well enough.

“To the table?” they said in unison.

Will laughed. He had predicted Hannibal’s reaction perfectly. He reached towards the wine glasses, taking in the appreciative smile from Hannibal at the help.

“I suppose we should properly introduce ourselves?” Hannibal said.

“We should,” Will agreed, nodding. He looked out the glass door. “But why don’t we get more comfortable?” he said grinning.

Hannibal took his hand, leading him to his office, Will made the bold move of taking a seat on top of Hannibal’s desk, perched like an angel on the edge of the heavens, thighs spread slightly. Hannibal stood before him, backlit by fire he looked demonic, bureaucratic and ruthless. Just as Will began to reach for his mask, Hannibal stopped him, placing a hand on his knee.

“Do we know each other?”

Will paused, considering his response.

“You know a mask of me. Two masks of me. There is one of decency... one that you see clear as day, like a fish in a stream. I know you, or at least, what you let me see of you.”

“Can I take a guess, or would it offend?” Hannibal asks, head cocked to the side, smiling. He’s been dreaming of this, of seeing the true face of the beast.

“Depends if you’re right or not,” Will said, laughing.

Hannibal added everything up, strong, lean, awkward, observant, someone he knows, someone who would have been able to pull all of the strings that had been…

“Agent Laurent?” he said, brow cocked.

Will wanted to be upset, but he could only laugh.

“Is that a no?”

“It’s a no, though Scott is definitely some kind of killer,” Will said, eyes tearing up.

As the Beast leaned over laughter audible through the mask, Hannibal reached his hand to the rough skin, fingers brushing over it in a firm stroke.

“Go ahead.”

Hannibal undid the zipper, revealing soft cocoa curls, a heated, sweet scent of *his* shampoo, the smell of blood that lingered like a fine cologne. He ran his fingers through them, the beast pressing back into his hand, touch starved, a soft tone in his voice, telling stories of desperation. Closed eyes rimmed by thick lashes, ruddy cheeks with some light stubble, a pair of pink lips.

“Will.”

It was reverent, it was shock and worship. Will opened his eyes, looking into the honey pools in in front of him.

“Hannibal.”

They leaned towards each other, eyes human, mouths open in a show of vulnerability. Will felt breath in his ear.

“After this,” Hannibal said, pressed into him, “we go hunting.”

# Why you should let Cannibals suck dick.

Chapter Notes

I... am proud of this. It is the first smut I've ever written, and ya know what? It's pretty fucking (pun intended) good. You can skip it if you want, as it is not vital to the rest of the story, I'll put # before and after it, otherwise enjoy some blowjobs?!
Here's the inspiration.
https://66.media.tumblr.com/87824e8e216fb9eeadc75cd590709614/tumblr_pjdzlghHU31r69qrjo5_400.gif

########################################

Soft lips moved from their spot, nipping at his ear, to Will's neck, a low hum resonating from deep in Hannibal's chest as he began to suck a bruise over the old one. Will smiled at both the sensation, and the idea that Hannibal was jealous of some imaginary lover. Will felt his heart rate speed as they began to get rid of all space between them Hannibal was pressed into him, one hand in his hair and the other firmly on his shoulder, while Will returned his feelings, a moan muffled by his bitten lip. Hannibal pulled him into a biting kiss, quite literally, as lips met teeth and tongues fought for dominance. Both men were out of breath at the intensity, pulling back in unison for breath. Hannibal took in the sight in front of him, staring at Will like a parched man at an oasis. He took Will's hand in his own, and took a step back.

"Since I saw you, Will, I have wanted to keep you, to consume you. Now that I can, this is all I can consider,"

Will groaned at the implications. He wanted to return the praise but

"Yes,"

was the only word his already wrecked voice could manage.

Hannibal moved down Will's body, fingers deftly undoing the buttons on *his* shirt, teeth scraping against taut skin and capable muscles, tongue lingering over the scars that wrapped around his rib cage.

"So you thought of this, with me, before you knew?"

The hickey being sucked over his left hip bone was answer enough for Will. Hannibal began to tease, tongue dipping towards the waistband, teeth clicking on the button of the slacks, breath hot and heavy. Will wraps his fingers around the edge of the desk, Hannibal's mouth beginning to undo his self control. Hannibal tugs lightly, thumbs caught in the belt loops of Will's pants, looking for something to grip and for permission to continue as he pleases. Will

gives it to him, lifting his hips up, urging the man before him, now on his knees, to continue. Hannibal looks up, eyes admiring and voice gravelly,

“I would pray to you like this, on my knees, only for you.”

The words are a shock, cushioned by the skin in front of him, as Hannibal bites at Will’s inner thigh.

Hannibal’s mind is a whirlwind of colour, eyes falling closed as he takes in the sensations around him, all of it is almost too much for his heightened senses. He can smell the rugged scent of Will, masculine, salty, desperate. The feeling of sensitive, firm flesh under his hands as he places them on Will’s hips. The relief he feels that he does not have to kill Will for the Beast is a sense of its own, coating the experience in the soft peach glow of contentment, tinged red by lust. He focuses again on the scent, pressing his tongue to the flesh in front of him, earning a gasp from Will. He repeats the action, his mind processing the meanings Will wears. Flower meanings were classic, beautiful, poignant.

Tansy: Hostile thoughts.
Honeysuckle: Bonds of love.
Ginger grass: Submission. Passion.

It was to be, he guessed, for whether or not Will knew these meanings, Hannibal would take them the same. Finally he closed his lips around Will, who let out a moan low in his throat, tilting his head back. Will’s hands tentatively went to his hair, looking down into Hannibal’s heavy lidded eyes for permission. Hannibal squeezed his thighs and Will wrapped his fingers in Hannibal's hair, pulling enough that it was painful. Hannibal moaned around him, bobbing his head.

“I thought of you,” Will said, feeling himself beginning to babble, hips trying to move against Hannibal’s firm grip.

“Thought of you in the hotel, how easy it would be to reach over in that bed. I even forgot my towel on purpose. I want-” Will was cut off as Hannibal did something with his tongue that left him breathless. However the moment he stopped talking Hannibal paused, looking up at Will with a devious glint in his eyes.

“Please,” Will said, breathless, “keep going.”

Hannibal pulled off of his length entirely.

“Make me,” he rasped, voice already showing signs of his indulgence in the other man. If Hannibal’s voice was deadly before… well… Will was reminded of the image of Hannibal covered in blood, warm and dangerous. Will groaned, more than happy to direct Hannibal where he wanted him by the hair. He pulled the man back onto him and stood up from the desk in one swift motion.

“You want me to keep talking?”

Hannibal nodded.

“I wanted you to see me. Wanted you to feel how I feel, even if it wouldn’t go beyond that. Wanted to cut you.”

Hannibal moaned.

“Wanted to tear you open, show you to yourself, strong and bloody and defeated. Broken by *me*.”
Hannibal hummed around him and Will began to lose control, thrusting into the wet mouth around him. He couldn’t hold back, and with a moan and a buck of his hips, he came. Hannibal swallowed every drop, pulling Will’s pants back up as he licked his lips.

Will, weak in the knees, yanked Hannibal up by his collar, pulling him into a kiss. He leaned his head forward, pulling Hannibal’s to the side and palming at him.

"I wanted much the same with you," Hannibal said, close to Will's ear, like a secret. Like a prayer.

“How- *pant*- how would you- *kiss*- kill me?” Will said.

Will bit his neck, rubbing Hannibal through his pants.

“With my knife... With my hands… I’d rip the heart out of your chest and keep it, as you’ve done to me,”

Will walked Hannibal towards the ladder, pressing him into it. Hannibal was beginning to lose all sense of self, all sense of anything that wasn’t-

“*Will ! more… please*”

Hannibal begged, for the first time in his life as the Ripper he begged for what he wanted. Will, merciful for the first time as the Beast, dove his hand into Hannibal’s pants, wrapping around his length and stroking, hand helped along by the precum that had been staining the front of his pants, reminiscent of their night in the hotel.

“I’d eat you, all of you. No one would ever know where you’d gone. I would have served you as I knew you to the Beast on a silver platter if I could have,” Hannibal gasped.

Will was gaining speed as Hannibal began panting in his ear, clutching Will like a lifeline. He was getting close. Will ducked down, taking Hannibal in his mouth, not wanting to make a mess. At the sight of Will on his knees, returning the favour, looking up at him darkly, Hannibal came, a small amount dripping out of the side of Will’s mouth.

Will stood up, licked his lips, and began leading a dazed Hannibal back to the dining room. Their dinner was getting cold.

##########

The meal was satisfying, their first kill together melting on Will's tongue. They sat in comfortable silence, both thinking on what had just happened.

Will spent a good amount of time staring into Hannibal's eyes, but seeing as good was a relatively flexible concept to Will, it could've been a second or a century.

Hours passed after the meal, hours full of meaningful gazes into the fireplace, and gentle touches of the hands. This of course soon evolved to more physical displays of adoration.

"I have to go home," Will said, pulling away from the new hickey he'd been working on.

"Stay."

"We have a case tomorrow, remember? A homicide and a missing person?"

"Why should we care what Jack wants of us? You deserve better than to be the FBI's inside man."

"Because if I don't they're going to assume I've been killed by the Beast, and probably go through my home."

"I'll call a cab," Hannibal said.

He left the room, making the call in his best "Person voice", while Will sat, feeling out of it. His head span, his hands twitched with unexpected energy. He had met the Ripper, he had been dressed by the Ripper, he had given the Ripper a blowjob. The Chesapeake Ripper was his unofficial FBI support, and he had yet to organize a second date.

"Will, would you join me tomorrow at L'agnello, for a proper date?"

"I think I'd like that."

"I've made plans for afterwards as well... bring the mask."

Will beamed.

He went down the steps and towards the cab, looking back at Hannibal. As the vehicle pulled away both of them were in their own heads, imagining their next meeting. Neither man noticed a dark figure lurking in the bushes.

Neither noticed the camera flashes.

Please drop by the Archive and comment to let the creator know if you enjoyed their work!